



March 1st, 2018

From the Conference Minister:

Dear Friends,

Today a high school in FL went back to school after another shooting. I cannot begin to imagine how hard it was for the students, teachers, and staff. As I have watched all unfold in these past two weeks, I have been in awe of the students nationwide who have taken a stand to say enough. They are reclaiming their schools and their lives. I celebrate their dedication and resolve. I believe that every child in this country deserves to go to school in safety. I am figuring out ways to help make that belief a reality for all of our students and I hope you will join me. Mass shootings are just one part of the issue. We still need to work on bullying, on the inequalities among school districts based on racism and classism, mental health issues, and having highly qualified and dedicated teachers in our classrooms. We can debate issues, but that only divides us. I believe that it is time to work together to make some small changes so that our children will know that we value them.

There are many, easy ways. Volunteer to read to students, tutor, send school supplies to your closest school, send that thank you card to the teachers and staff. These are small things we all can do that will make a difference. Get to know a child or teen in your congregation. Ask them what interests them. Make a connection. Let them know you care. When tragedy strikes, it is easy to feel helpless. We cannot stop violence from encroaching into the lives of children and teens, but we can let them know that many people love and care for them. And for that, I give God thanks and praise.

Many youth groups are traveling to Washington, D.C. for the March 24th rally and many youth are attending affiliated rallies in other cities that day. If you know of a rally, please let the conference know so we can publicize it. Thank you.

Blessings and peace,
Marie



Yearbook Reporting: Submit your Church Statistics Today!-Last Three days!

It's time again for reporting of Yearbook statistics for the past year. The UCC Data Hub is open and ready for your submission. If you are responsible for reporting your Yearbook Statistics for your church and have not received information from the Conference, please contact Heather at hbardole@secucc.org or 404-719-6572 to receive your churches information. Yearbook reports are due by March 7, 2018.- This Wednesday!

Year of Discernment Update

We have two dates and places for regional meetings.

- Saturday, April 7, 2018 at Howard Congregational Church, Nashville, TN, time TBD.
- Saturday, April 14, 2018 at United Church of Huntsville, Huntsville, AL from 2-3:30pm.

There will be two more regional meetings, one in the Atlanta area and one

in Charleston, SC. We are still working on finding dates.

The two books we are reading:

- *Institutional Intelligence: How to Build an Effective Organization* by Gordon T. Smith
- *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* by Tod Bolsinger.

If you have any questions, please contact Marie.

Authorized Ministers Information Review

The Authorized Ministers Annual review has started. If you have not already completed yours, please do so soon. Thank you to everyone who has already filled out and returned the review. There are two ways you can return your Annual Review:

1. The preferred way is to [complete the online form](#).
2. Alternatively, you can [download a PDF](#) of the form, print and mail it to the Conference Office: PO Box 1950, Decatur, Georgia 30031.

If you have any questions, please contact the Conference Registrar at registrar@secucc.org or 404-719-572. We will be mailing out hard copies to those who have not completed the review next week. Please submit your completed Annual Review **by March 20, 2018**. We will be following up if you do not respond.

Message from Our Generosity Coordinator

The BAD news is that we fell short of our Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) goal by \$26,000.00 for 2017. The GOOD news is that we can meet our goals for 2018. Let's start early so that we can "finish strong" in 2018.

Some questions we may ask:

What is OCWM?

This is the name we give to congregational gifts that support wider UCC Ministry in Conference and National Settings.

Why give to OCWM basic support?

Because we believe in God's continuing testament to the world, we take

stands for justice and peace, proclaim "God is still speaking," teach best practices for pastors and congregations, communicate the UCC message, nurture formation of those discerning a call to ministry. Because we believe in extravagant welcome, we preach welcoming and open understanding of Christian faith, respond to disasters and human tragedies, feed the hungry, send help all round the world, nurture ecumenical and interfaith relationships. Because we believe in transforming lives, we raise our children in faith, equip leaders for ministry, foster beauty in worship, provide services to the church.

We ask that you start by:

- Informing your leaders about OCWM,
- Work toward OCWM giving goals, work with church leadership to set attainable goals. Begin with short term goals that yield long term results. Set goals, establish a progression and give regularly.
- Establish year round OCWM education.
- Work with your pastor and leadership.
- Invite conference staff to visit your congregation on Sunday.
- We are happy to share with you and your congregation how your OCWM dollars are spent.

I'm excited about our journey together.
Carrole Moss,

Healthy Boundaries Training

Through our partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia, we are offering Healthy Boundaries 101 Fundamentals from 9 am-4 pm on March 10, 2018 at First Christian Church, Tucker, GA. Sign up at <http://gadisciples.org/clergy/HealthyBoundariesworkshop.asp>.





Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2018. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers. [Click here to download the entire 2018 prayer list.](#)

Week of March 5

- United Church of Cookeville; Cookeville, Tennessee
- PATHWAYS Theological Education Program
- Roy Bain
- Douglas Farmer
- Vant Hardaway
- David Speno

Week of March 12

- Rehoboth Fellowship; Atlanta, Georgia
- UCC National Staff and Collegium
- Valerie Coe Lowder
- Tavye Morgan
- Timothy Garvin-Leighton
- James Janecek

Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Birmingham, AL; Pilgrimage, Marietta, GA; Sandy Creek, Lafayette, AL; United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville, TN

News from our Local Congregations



The youth of the Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Montgomery Alabama presented "Living Black History Museum." Young people brought to life heroes and heroines of Black History including Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks, Barack and Michelle Obama, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Madame C.J.Walker, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and many more.



Rev. Katelyn Kilpatrick was interview on ZClub News

Rev. Traci Blackmon To Preach at First Congregational UCC, Atlanta March 11th, 2018.

First Congregational UCC is excited to share with you that **Rev. Traci Blackmon, Executive Minister, Justice and Local Ministries, United Church of Christ National Setting, Cleveland, OH** will be the Women's Day speaker on March 11, 2018 at First Congregational UCC, Atlanta, GA, Rev. Dwight Andrews, Pastor at the 11am worship.

Women's Day Worship is part of the Women's Weekend, A weekend of purpose driven faith, fellowship, fun, and commitment March 9th-11th. The Plenary Speaker is Rev. Jennifer Eichelberger and panelists include: Desiree Pedescleaux Andrews, Sonjia Young, LaVerne Dixon, Yvonne Bryant Johnson, Jamila Oni, Jacqueline Bunn, and Barbara Rawls. Tickets for Friday and Saturday are \$35 for adults, \$20 for students and seniors. Tickets available at First Church and on the day of the event.

News from the Wider Church

A Pastoral Letter on Sexual Misconduct

*“Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan,
and the Lord will hear my voice.” Psalm 55*

In recent months, there have been numerous stories of sexual misconduct by men of power in various settings of business, media, entertainment, and politics. In each case, it took the courage of one to name their experience of being sexually harassed or abused by someone more powerful than themselves in order for the sin of sexual abuse to finally be recognized.

We confess that the United Church of Christ (UCC) is not immune to these sins of sexual harassment, abuse, and misconduct. We repent when those in power at any setting of the UCC has acted inappropriately and violated others with their words, actions, or power. We, the Church, have sinned, and we ask for forgiveness from those, who have been violated.

We recognize the stories of courageous women and men in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures who, when they were sexually assaulted by men of power, God provided them strength, courage, and love already within them because they were created in God’s image. So, too, we honor that all are created in God’s image and have the capacity for wholeness in the midst of sexual abuse and misconduct.

We, the leaders of the United Church of Christ, are committed to providing safe space for all, where sexual harassment, abuse, or misconduct is not tolerated. Our Committees on Ministry along with MESA (Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization) seek to ensure our churches, authorized ministers, and volunteers safe space from sexual misconduct of power.

May God’s Peace be with us as we seek to create a Just World for All, which starts with safe space for all.

Faithfully yours,

The National Officers of the United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President

The Rev. Traci Blackmon, Executive Minister, Justice and Witness Ministries

The Rev. James Moos, Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries

The Council of Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ

Training and Learning Opportunities

Free Webinars Offered by the Insurance Board

Driver Management for Owned and Non-Owned Vehicles-March 14 @ 2:00 (EST)

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 94% of motor vehicle crashes are attributed to driver error. Insurance Board is pleased to have our partners from The Hartford provide insights on driver screening, training and supervision to improve control of drivers and reduce auto accidents. [REGISTER](#)

Other Webinars Offered

Ladder Safety (The Hartford)

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

2:00 PM to 3:00 PM (Eastern Time)

Sex Offenders in Your Congregation: Recommendations and Best Practices (Heather Kimmel)

Wednesday, May 23, 2018

2:00 PM to 3:00 PM (Eastern Time)

Trending Risk Management Concerns for Churches (The Insurance Board)

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

2:00 PM to 3:00 PM (Eastern Time)

New PATHWAYS Classes Start in March

PATHWAYS Theological Education is offering courses beginning in March:

UCC History & Polity for \$650.00

March 7-June 5, 2018 (12 Weeks + Holy Week break)

The Rev. Dr. Anita Bradshaw will facilitate this course

Level One Course: Ethics and a Life of Meaning for \$375

March 7 to April 24, 2018

The Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver will facilitate this course

Level Three Course: Theology in the Public Square for \$375 March 7 to April 24, 2018

The Rev. Dr. Trish Greeves is facilitating

PATHWAYS is also available to individuals who want to deepen their knowledge and Christian faith but are not following a call to authorized ministry. Learn more about each of these courses and register online at www.pathways-ucc.org. If you would like more information, please contact PATHWAYS at pathways@secucc.org. Please share this announcement with others.

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